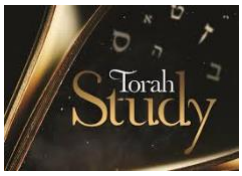
20170113 Exodus 6:2-9:35 "WHO is Like Unto Thee Oh Lord Among the gods?



"WHO is Like Unto Thee Oh Lord Among the gods?" Series: "Lessons for Living: A Christian Walk through the Torah" by Faber McMullen, Union Grove Baptist Church ©2017-2018

VA'ERA **(I appeared – וארא)** Exodus **6:2-9:35**

BO (Come – בוא) Exodus **10:1-13:16**

Good morning! Please open your Bibles this morning to the Book of Shemot (Exodus) chapter 6 and we will cover two Torah portions this morning beginning at verse 14 and we will work our way to Exodus 13:11

I have combined two portions this morning for several reasons. One reason is that next week we will host the Purple Hulls, a singing group from Kilgore, Texas. That will be a wonderful experience in Gospel singing and worship and I will give an abbreviated message from the Apostle Paul's letter to the church in Galatia. The second reason is that the two portions of today cover the story of the 10 plagues that God visited on the Egyptians to provoke the release of the Jewish people from approximately 400 years of slavery. This approach will allow us to look at all the plagues simultaneously.

Last week we looked at the calling of Moses. We saw that Moses walked with God and spoke with God. He had a more intimate conversation with God than any person before him or since him. Remember God first spoke to him from a burning bush that was not consumed. God spoke the word "Holy" ***Kodesh*** for the first time in the Bible as He told Moses, "Take off your sandals for you are on HOLY ➔ground!". And there in that desert encounter, **P1:** God revealed His Name above All Names the Name ***HaShem,*** a four-lettered name that is so holy that orthodox Jews dare not even utter that name. The name embodies and encapsulates the overwhelming timeless transient nature of God over all of time and creation.

Last week we sat in wonder to realize that even if we only understand a fraction of the essence and character of God He still longs to have an intimate walk with each person in this room. The heart of that walk is prayer, real prayer. It's the kind of prayer that "gets real with God". We are so blessed to be learning from Judge McCaig how to pray with passion where we know that God hears us and where we know He truly is in conversation with us. And so today we continue to listen to God's on-going conversation with Moses.

➔We pick up in Exodus Chapter 6 verse 14 and 15 with the Geneology of Moses and Aaron. The author skims over Reuben and Simeon and settles on Levi from whom Aaron and Moses descend. The Levites are special. They are now being called of God for a destiny and a purpose. The are called for a destiny of service. It is Aaron's descendents who will become the ***Cohenim*** (priests). It is this tribe that will become the keepers of the places and articles of worship. As many of you know in our congregation we have a man who descends from the Tribe of Levi, and I am continually amazed to watch as God uses him in every act of service imagineable. And what is so amazing, is that he has almost no awareness of God working in and through him in this way. **P2:** We each should be inspired to serve likewise remembering that in God's vocabulary, work, service, and worship are all the same thing in God's vocabulary (***Avodah***). When your are walking in the Spirit, your work is your service. Your service is your worship, and your work is your worship. It is a picture of an integrated life. It is exciting to think that we can each be at the heart of worship whether it's Cassandra carrying a feed bucket, Dr.Denise seeing a patient, or Darrell repairing a water well. When we enter into a real conversation with God our whole being begins to glorify Him.

In Exodus Chapter 7 we see the first of the ten plagues that God will bring upon Egypt. It is fair to ask why God has to go through this whole long business of ➔ratcheting up the heat to force Pharoah's hand to let His people go. **P3:** I think the plagues have two main purposes. 1) To prove to the Jewish people that their God, Yahweh, truly is the One and Only True God. He is all-powerful over all the other gods claimed by others, and 2) To prove to the Egyptians that Yahweh is the only God and that His people are special to God.
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1 - BLOOD (Exodus 7:14-17)
The first plague is mentioned in Chapter 7 verse 14, [14] So the LORD said to Moses: "Pharaoh's heart *is* hard; he refuses to let the people go. [15] Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the water, and you shall stand by the river's bank to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand. [16] And you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness"; but indeed, until now you would not hear! [17] Thus says the LORD: "By this you shall know that I *am* the LORD. Behold, I will strike the waters which *are* in the river with the rod that *is* in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. [18] And the fish that *are* in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river." ' "[1]

And this is exactly what happened. The text tells us that even the water that was in buckets turned to blood. This was a clear judgment against Apis, the god of the Nile along with a judgment against Isis the goddess of the Nile. All life came out

[1] *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ex 7:14–18). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

of the Nile and Yahweh was showing that with one tap of a staff daily life was disrupted in Egypt as millions of fish died in the river making the water unusable. (Exodus 7:17)

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2 - FROGS (Exodus 8:13-14)

The second plague was a judgment against Heget, the frog-headed goddess of birth. Frogs were sacred in Egypt and were not to be killed. So God cause frogs to invade very space in the land. They were in houses, pantrys, kitchen pots and pans and in the beds of the Egyptians. The frogs then died and verses 13 and 14 tell us their bodies were heaped up in the land.

3 - GNATS (Exodus 8:19)

The third plague was judgment against the god of the desert, Set. This was the first of the plagues that pharoah's magicians could not duplicate. When they came to pharoah to explain their frustration they tell him, "This is the finger of God". This is the first hint to pharoah that he might not understand who he is dealing with.

4 - FLIES (Exodus 8:21-24)

The pestilence of flies was judgment on Uatchit, the Egyptian Fly god. As the flies descended on Egypt not a fly bothered the Children of Israel in their Camp. God was distinguishing His people.

5 - DEATH OF LIVESTOCK (Exodus 9:7)

God then brought judgment against Hathor and Apis who were depicted as cattle. The cattle of the Egyptians died by the thousands and the cattle of the Children of Israel were untouched. The cattle were the heart of the Egyptian economy and God was hitting the Egyptians in their pocketbooks. The text tells us that Pharoah sent investigators to figure out how the Israelites were being affected he found that none of the cattle of the Israelites had died. Exodus 9:7

6 - BOILS (Exodus 9:8-12)

God sent boils on the Egyptians. This was judgment on the gods of health and disease (Sunu, Sekhmet, and Isis). The physical pain was so great on the Egyptians that the text tells us that "the magicians could not stand before Moses

because of the boils. All Israel saw that these religious leaders were powerless before the God of Israel.

INTERMISSION - Before God sent the last three plagues, God sent Pharoah a special message. He told Pharoah that these plagues would be so severe that it would prove that "there is none like Me in all the earth." (Exodus 9:14) God explained to Pharoah that He had placed Pharoah in his position as King to be the recipient of these plagues so that God would show His power and His Name throughout all the earth. And then in a act of mercy He told Pharoah to gather up and shelter any cattle or crops that had survived. The text tells us that some of Pharoah's ministers heeded the warning and took cover, and then all hell broke loose. **P5:** EACH TIME Scripture tells us that God hardened Pharoah's heart. This was possible because God knew Pharoah would not repent.

7 - HAIL (Exodus 9:22)

This next plague would bring Egypt to total destruction and ruin. This was God's judgment on the Egyptian god Nut, the sky goddess. Read along with me in Chapter 9:

22 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be
hail in all the land of Egypt—on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout
the land of Egypt." 23 And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent
thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of
Egypt. 24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was
none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25 And the hail struck
throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that *was* in the field, both man and beast; and the
hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. 26 Only in the land of
Goshen, where the children of Israel *were*, there was no hail.[2]

8 - LOCUSTS (Exodus 10:7)

Next, a plague of locusts swarmed onto Egypt. Pharoah's ministers begged him to release the people to go worship their God. The text quotes them, "7 Then Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God. Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed?" But still Pharoah's heart was hardened.

This was in judgment of the Egyptian gods Nut, Osiris, and Set. All of the later crops that had survived the hail were now destroyed and eaten by locusts. There remained not be one kernel of corn, one nut from a tree, one piece of fruit.... NOTHING would be harvested in Egypt that year. Scripture tells us that the sky turned black with the insects in the air as they descended ravenously upon the land.

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[2] *The New King James Version*. (1982). (Ex 9:22–26). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

9 - DARKNESS (Exodus 10:21)

This plague was aimed directly at the most important Egyptian god of all, Rah - The Sun god. For three days God caused a darkness to descend on Egypt. The Egyptians were out of food, they were riddled with disease, and now the sunlight disappeared. As light departed from the land no doubt chaos ensued. The Egyptians could not endure more and then the unthinkable happened.

➔10 - DEATH TO FIRSTBORN MALES (Exodus 11)

Isis was the protector god of children. In this plague God pointed out to the Children of Israel the promise of a coming Messiah. You see God brought a death angel which visited every single house in Egypt. Moses gave the people instructions on how to signal to the death angel that a house was to be passed by. He told the Children of Israel to take an male lamb without blemish and to kill it. **P6:** He then instructed each family to take the blood of that innocent lamb, and apply it to the top and the sides of the doorposts of the house. They were promised that when the angel saw the blood on the doorposts he would "pass over" that house sparing all inside, sparing the first born. (Exodus 12:23)

P7: In this last plague God is giving His people a perfect foreshadowing of a cleansing of sin and a forgiveness that extends far beyond the sacrifices of goats and lambs. Four hundred years of bondage to the Egyptians could only be ended with the shedding of blood. In the same way, forgiveness of sin cannot be accomplished without the shedding of blood.

1 Corinthians 5:7 teaches us that Jesus was our Passover sacrifice when He died to deliver us from ourselves and sin. After this horrific plague, Pharoah gave up and released God's people who had now become God's nation, to start their trek through the wilderness to find their way to a Holy Land, their Promised Land. In seeing the plagues brought upon Egypt they now had a clear understanding of the greatness of their God. We too look on in wonder, and we are able to sing along with Moses and Miriam the words from our next Torah portion.

➔`"Who *is* like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods?
Who *is* like unto You, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders?
Who is like unto Thee?"

Let us pray

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868 Tel: 936-825-1227